

## Filner vows 'full equity' for Fil-Am vets

SAN DIEGO, Calif. - Five-term Congressman Bob Filner (D-Chula Vista) has vowed he will not rest until Filipino-American veterans will get their "full equity" benefits and recognition as defenders of freedom and democracy during World War II.

"This is a major reason why I should be elected back to Congress, with the support of the Filipino-American community" said Filner during a dinner-dance and induction of officers of the newly-organized Alaminos City Association of San Diego County and the Alaminos High School Alumni Association International at the Marine Corps Air Station's Officers' Club in Miramar over the weekend. Filner came by to greet the guests and to welcome Alaminos City Mayor Eduardo Fontelera and his wife, who flew all the way from the Philippines to be guests of honor at the occasion.

In his brief remarks, Filner said that just before he left Washington for the West Coast, the U.S. House of Representatives passed his bill "that would give Filipino-American veterans of World War II access to the U.S. health care system for veterans and who, for the first time since 1946, will be recognized as heroes of the United States of America."

"This is a partial victory," said Filner who has for years been in the forefront in the campaign to give equity to Filipino veterans, "partial in the sense that it applies only to those citizens of the U.S. and that it does not give pension benefits."

He said that that was the compromise he had to make with the existing "power structure" in Congress.

According to the congressman, his bill provides for the U.S. Veterans Administration to give \$500,000 a year to the Veterans Hospital in the Philippines, "so there will be a higher level of health care for the Filipino-American veterans living in the Philippines."

"We only got the health benefits for U.S. citizens but before my term is finished in Congress, we will also get the benefits for the rest of the veterans. So with your support, I am going back to Congress and we'll get the equity act approved so that we will recognize finally the true heroism and the contributions of those brave Filipino veterans of World War II," he said.

"For his part, Mayor Fontelera spoke about the progress being made in the City of Alaminos and of the circumstances that led it to become a city. He thanked his townmates residing in San Diego for honoring him with an invitation to be a guest of honor on the group's induction of officers.

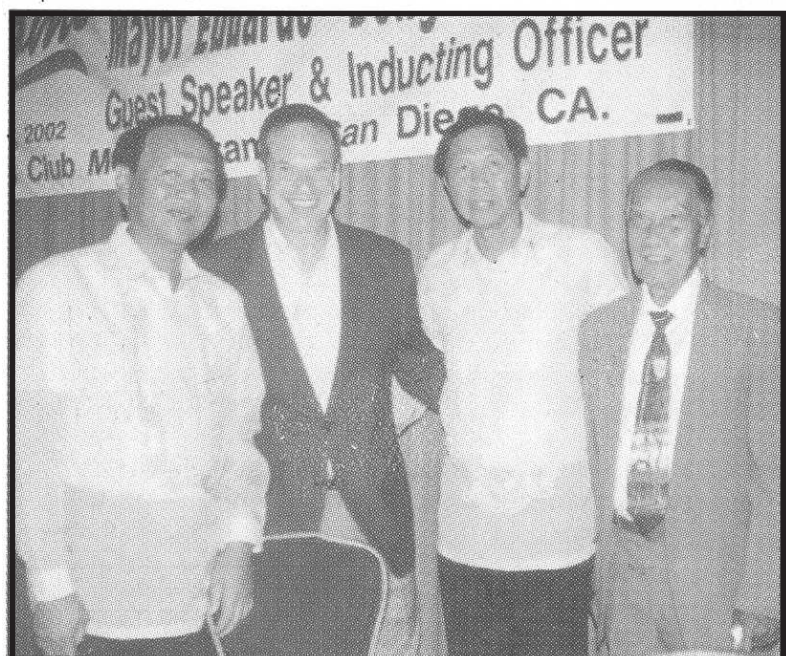
Fontelera spoke of his wish that his city will become a sister city with the City of San Diego so that some sort of working relationships be established between the two cities.

The mayor later inducted the new officers of the association for the years 2002-2004. Inducted were: Jimmy R. Boton, president; Apella Rabina Copon, Ming Navarro Bacala, Naty Bristol Quebral, Helen Basila Quintanella, Marcial CaQatic, vice presidents; Imelda

Rabina Romero, secretary; Flor Victo Caburao, assistant secretary; Purificacion Liasos' Navarro, treasurer; Pacita Conte West, assistant treasurer; Ben Baguioso, auditor; Pablo Rabanal, Nick Caburao, Alex Cabrito, Ador Rasing, business managers; Rev. Richard West, chaplain; Isabel Catabay Villaro, Cecilie Baguioso, Flor Cabatic Radam, Tina Sanchez, Nellie Pascua, Norma Villaruz, Dr. Claire Carambas, Jaime Raquino, Ben Bustria, Rudy Soriano, members of the board of directors and Alex Duque and Perlita Rasing, advisers.

During the same evening, McKing Alanis, chief of staff of Congressman Randy "Duke" Cunningham, presented to the mayor, a Congressional Proclamation authored by the solon, declaring August 10 as City of Alaminos Day in his congressional district.

A representative of San Diego Deputy Mayor George Stevens also presented a similar document to Mayor Fontelera. Manny Doria, a native of Pangasinan and a long-time aide to Congressman Bob Filner introduced his boss during the program. Public dancing followed the ceremonies and dinner.



Mayor Eduardo Fontelera of the City of Alaminos, extreme left, pose for photo with from left, Congressman Bob Filner, Dr. Jimmy Boton and Alex P. Duque during dinner/dance at the MCAS Miramar Officers Club. (Filipino Press photo by E. Flores, Jr.)

